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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: POLICE AND EDUCATORS JOIN FORCES IN ARMENIAN
SCHOOLS

1. SUMMARY. Project Harmony implemented an INL funded legal socialization project that has helped to build bridges between Armenian students, educators and law enforcement officials. The "ZANG" project brought together secondary teachers and policemen to create off-line and on-line curricula on Armenian law, the role of the police and the rights and responsibilities of the individual for secondary school children as well as children from institutions for juvenile delinquents and orphans. The project--the first of its kind in Armenia--put the curricula to work in 22 pilot schools throughout the country. We believe that this program has the potential to improve the general attitude toward the law and law enforcement bodies among Armenia's youth. Moreover, this project will enable the successor generation to become an informed, active participant in the fight against corruption. END SUMMARY.

2. PROJECT CURRICULA. The course consists of 8 lesson plans that aim to stimulate discussion and creative and analytical thinking while improving students' understanding of the law and law enforcement officials. A pilot manual has been created and presented in 22 schools throughout Armenia. The lesson plans follow:

--Lesson 1: The Law and Awareness of Youth: What is the role of law enforcement in everyday life and its importance?

--Lesson 2: The State, the Law and Juveniles: Why do laws exist and how do they impact society and the individual? Subtopics: The Constitution, freedom, the law, and rights and responsibilities.

--Lesson 3: Legal Process and Procedures.

--Lesson 4: Corruption-Why should laws be obeyed?

--Lesson 5: Making Good Choices: Smoking, Narcotics, Alcohol and Relevant Laws.

--Lesson 6: How to Say No: Consequences of Smoking, Drinking and Abusing Drugs.

--Lesson 7: Rules of the Road: Traffic Regulation and Safety.

--Lesson 8: Wrapping Up: Expectations and Results.

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National Police Committed and Active from the Top-Down
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3. Following her participation in the project's U.S. exchange component, Lt. Col. Nelli Duryan (head of the Juvenile Department of the National Police) redoubled her efforts to work with juvenile offenders and prevention programs. Using what she learned during the program, she has initiated a series of reforms of the juvenile justice system. She also assured that officers in the pilot regions actively participated in the ZANG project.

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Teachers and Cops Team Up: A First Time for Everything.
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4. Although in Soviet times the juvenile police visited schools and work with actual and potential juvenile offenders, contact was largely limited to school principals and teachers and did not include liaison with or education of children. Under the ZANG Project, police officers are active participants both in the educational process and in the students' discussions. Initially, both teachers and students were tense and held back their opinions. As the course developed, communication greatly improved. For example, in the Vardashen Special School-home to street children, juvenile delinquents, and children without parental guardians--there has been a dramatic change in the extent to which students are willing to express their

opinions and ask questions of police. Many of these children have had interaction (both good and bad) with law enforcement officials; the police officer working with this class informed us that after a few lessons some of the students admitted that they were originally fearful of reprisals if they were open or critical. Moreover, the students were fearful that police would attempt to use them as informants against their friends and acquaintances. One student commented that he has learned that not all police are bad and that police should play an important role in society--that of maintaining order.

15. Police place juvenile offenders under ongoing, periodic surveillance. Dealing appropriately with juvenile offenders, particularly once they have been paroled or have completed their sentence, is one area that continues to require improvement. The ZANG project gave the Juvenile Police the opportunity to help young people recognize illegal and socially unacceptable behaviors. This project also allows the police to take a proactive, preventive approach to at-risk children. The grandmother of one student who had served a juvenile sentence commented to Project Harmony that she was thrilled that this program is in place. Her grandson brings home what he has learned in the ZANG lesson and enthusiastically continues his school discussion with her.

16. COMMENT. During a project review workshop, police and educators unanimously agreed that the program was worthwhile and important. Lt. Col. Duryan said that she is committed to continuing the ZANG project with or without funding. We believe that this program can improve relations between Armenian law enforcement officials and the general public by overcoming the prevailing belief that the police cannot or will not help when needed. Moreover, this project will engender responsible, law-abiding behavior in a society that has become used to extra judicial solutions to legal problems. We look forward to the next stage of the project. END COMMENT.

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